

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 182759 TOSEC 190080

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 6559 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAIRO DAMASCUS
JIDDA

QUOTE:

S E C R E T BEIRUT 6559

EXDIS

DEPT TREAT AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR

SUBJECT: BEIRUT EVACUATION: REASON GIVEN FRENCH FOR CONVOY DELAY

1. FRENCH CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, DE LADAILLAD, TOLD ME TODAY, JULY 23,
THAT DURING FRENCH CONSULAR OFFICER'S MEETING TODAY WITH PLO SECURITY
OFFICIAL, LATTER CLAIMED THAT REASON OUR CONVOY HAS BEEN DELAYED IS
PRESENCE OF UNCONTROLLABLE ELEMENTS ALONG NABATIYEH ROUTE. PLO
OFFICIAL ALSO SAID THAT THREE LIBYAN SOLDIERS WERE KILLED NEAR THERE,
OSTENSIBLY BY SYRIANS.

2. COMMENT: THIS, OF COURSE, IS STORY PLO CONTACT GAVE US,
NIGHT BEFORE CONVOY WAS DUE TO LEAVE (BEIRUT 6424.) IT IS INTERESTING

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THAT PLO IS REVERTING TO THIS STORY AFTER HAVING SUBSEQUENTLY GIVEN
US (AND BRITISH) QUITE DIFFERENT VERSIONS (BEIRUT 6497 AND BEIRUT
6506). INVALIDITY OF VERSION GIVEN FRENCH IS SUBSTANTIATED BY
EX-LEBANESE G-2 OFFICIAL FORMERLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PALESTINIAN
AFFAIRS, COL. HAMDAN. HAMDAN ATTRIBUTES CONVOY'S POSTPONEMENT
TO SAME BASIS REASON WE HAVE (BEIRUT 6506). HE TOLD EMBASSY
LOCAL TODAY THAT THERE ARE NO SECURITY PROBLEMS ALONG NABATIYEH
ROUTE, AND THAT "ONLY" REASON FOR PLO POSTPONEMENT DECISION WAS
TO PREVENT FOREIGNERS FROM LEAVING LEBANON IN THE LIGHT OF REPORTS
OF AN IMMINENT ATTACK ON LEBANON BY FOREIGNERS, ESPECIALLY
SYRIANS."
SEELYE UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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NNN

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